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The Kohler Report. PAGE 18



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LEAPING STRAIGHT INTO OUR HEARTS

Sadie, a 14-month-old hound-cross, made her viral debut after Buzzfeed spotted an Instagram video of her bouncing around at the Edmonton Humane Society. Read more on page 8. LEAH HOLOIDAY/METRO

GSA document 'disheartening'

Schools. Advocate says leaked memo showing Catholic trustees are against any legislation on gay-straight alliances draws 'a line in the sand'

Provincial Catholic school trustee representatives believe any form of legislation to support gay-straight alliances would intrude on their rights and is unnecessary, according to the contents of a leaked internal memo.

The document, which Metro confirmed with multiple sources, was drafted by the Alberta Catholic Schools Trustees' Association (ACSTA), was deemed "very disheartening" by one LGBTQ advocate in an interview Thursday, especially after what he described as years of attempts to work with separate school officials.

"What this document really does is draw a line in the sand," said Dr. Kris Wells, co-director of the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services at the University of Alberta. "It shows that the Catholic school trustees are not prepared to move. So, the ball is squarely in the government's court."

The memo outlines a series of historical developments and position statements that use the provincial Education Act as evidence.

"The Alberta Act clearly delineates responsibilities of the various levels of government," reads one portion. "Intruding on these rights is a slippery slope and diminishes the roles and responsibilities of trustees."

The memo goes on to state the act contains the "strongest anti-bullying language in Canada," and that "no additional legislation is necessary."

Debate of gay-straight alliances dominated the tail-end of Alberta's fall legislative session after the Alberta Liberals introduced Bill 202, which required schools to support students wishing to create the peer support groups.

The ruling Progressive Conservatives then upended that offering with Bill 10, one that would mandate support for a GSA but not necessarily on school property.

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO IN CALGARY

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NEWS

Public transportation

Bus reroutes scheduled for end of April

As downtown construction continues, city planners are gearing up to launch eight bus route changes by the end of April to accommodate the construction.

According to city officials, routes 1, 2, 5, 52, 88, 109, 135 and 309 will all be rerouted starting April 26.

"The change is permanent. (The reroutes) are for the closure of 102A Avenue in the Quarters and it also relates to the upcoming closure of 102 Avenue through all of downtown core," says Andrew Gregory, senior transit planning engineer with the city.

Specific bus route changes will be made available in early March, with no more than a one or two block change expected for the eight reroutes, Gregory says.

Route numbering changes to three Mill Woods night routes will also happen, with bus numbers 75, 76, 77 changing to routes 361, 362, 363 so that "it frees up 70 numbers" for additional service in the Summerside area coming aboard within the next two years.

"We always try to have an area be in the same group (numbers). For example, all of Riverbend and Terwillegar is in the 30s," he says.

That's why the city has also decided to consolidate routes 5 and 135 to just route 5 to make it simpler for riders who can enjoy the schedule of both routes under one number, Gregory says.

STEPHANIE DUBOIS/METRO

Alberta Health Services to cut down on expenses

Budget. Organization plans to roll back spending on severance pay, sick days, cellphone bills and travel for employees



LEAH HOLOIDAY
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Vickie Kaminski, Alberta Health Services president and CEO, speaks to reporters about austerity measures coming into place because of the tight provincial budget. Kaminski said the department was directed by the Ministry of Health to cut expenses. LEAH HOLOIDAY/METRO

Alberta's health-care authority announced "aggressive" new cost-cutting measures Thursday in an attempt to reduce spending before the province drops its latest budget.

Thanks to a dramatic drop in oil prices, Alberta Health Services (AHS) CEO Vickie Kaminski said the department was directed by the Ministry of Health to cut expenses.

By rolling back spending on severance pay, sick days, cellphone bills and travel for AHS employees, Kaminski said the organization is hoping to put a dent in the "largest piece of the province's spending pie."

"We haven't quantified it. We are looking to maximize our savings," she said, noting the amount of savings should be known by March.

Along with curbing the hiring of new staff and consultants, AHS has trimmed the number of VPs from 80 to 11, removing an additional 13 senior leader classification positions and cutting another three.

The organization is also hoping to cutback on severance costs by implementing stronger performance management policies.

Between 2011 and 2014, AHS paid $28 million in severance, paying $3.5 million in the current fiscal year.

Kaminski said the severance spending was the "most disconcerting" of all expenses and said there are big opportunities to save money.

Cellphone costs are another expense AHS is planning on cutting back. Over an 18-month period, AHS paid $825,000 in bills, prompting it to launch a new policy to limit roaming charges.

Sick leave will also be under review. Annually, it costs AHS $190 million to cover sick leave costs. Managers have been prompted to review staff absentees in an effort to limit that cost.

NDP health critic David Eggen said AHS's discretionary might not be enough to save the province from expected budget cuts.

"We already know our frontline workers, delivery of services is stretched very far," he said. "I'm very concerned about what the next layer that will be cut."

Cutting Costs

- Alberta Health Services (AHS) will curb hiring new staff and consultants, in favour of consolidating positions without affecting direct patient care and frontline positions.
- The department has also put the brakes on travel for staff, limiting the expenditures to cases where travelling is required. AHS will be launching a new travel program next week to better track and report costs associated with travelling.
- Contract negotiations were also affected by the cost containments, with AHS retracting an initial one-per cent salary increase for the next three years and have tabled a 0 per cent pay increase.

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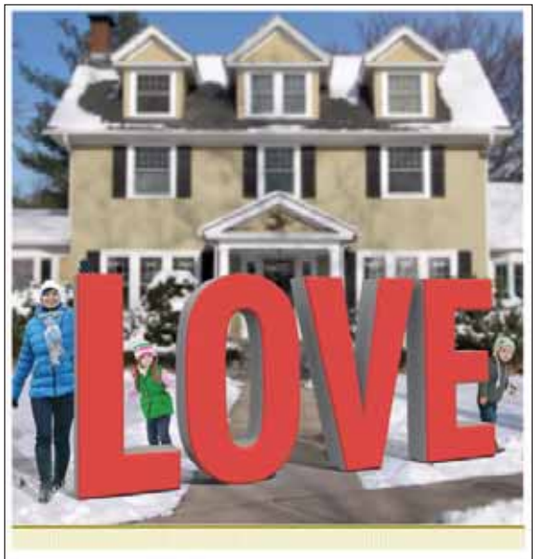
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Canada

Zoo. No winter coat for aging elephant Lucy

The Edmonton Valley Zoo's lone elephant will not get a chance to try on a winter coat from a group concerned about her well-being.

Friends of Lucy chipped in $250 to buy the extra-extra-extra large waterproof and insulated garment to protect Lucy from the cold.

Zoo spokeswoman Debi Winwood says Lucy doesn't need the coat, which Winwood says is more like a blanket.


Lucy the elephant THE CANADIAN PRESS

She says it will be donated to an elephant orphanage in Africa or Asia.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Survey. Province seeks online budget input

Got an idea to help close the $7-billion hole in the provincial budget? The Alberta government wants to hear it.

Finance Minister Robin Campbell announced a new online survey Thursday that asks Albertans where they think the province should cut or what taxes it should hike.

Campbell said the dramatic drop in oil prices has to be managed.

"We're facing a 15 per cent loss in our revenues and that is equal to our entire education budget," he said.

The survey asks about a possible sales tax, which the province estimates would bring in $1 billion per percentage point.

Campbell said even though the government doesn't support the idea, he wants to hear what Albertans have to say.

"I serve the people of the province. I need to know what they're thinking."

RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

City set to close down beloved skating pond

Recreation. Family surprised by municipal response, but officials say the naturally-occurring park rink is a safety hazard


RYAN TUMILTY
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A small pond rink in a city park has a date with destruction after city crews deemed it unsafe, much to the chagrin of a local family.

Daniel Aire said his kids were delighted to find the naturally-occurring rink in Giovanni Caboto Park last week. He said he raised the idea of creating a small rink with the city last year and when it naturally formed, he sent images to the city to show it was possible.

Aire said he was shocked by the city's response — that the rink had to go.


Daniel Aire, his son Andrew and his daughter Iona stand on the pond rink they have been using but the city plans to take out. RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

"Why not work with us and try to make it feasible? But they didn't go there at all, it was just a very bureaucratic response," he said.

The ice patch is about four metres wide and five metres long, and Aire said it formed after the recent warm spell ended.

"Our kids were loving it. There were other kids using it," he said.

Coun. Scott McKeen said he has asked administration about the issue, but he doesn't think the city went out of its way to close the rink.

"I don't think it's our practice or our policy to find ways to rain on people's parades," he said.

He also said he has never heard of a rink forming naturally like this.

"It's almost miraculous," he said.

Doug Costigan, with the city, confirmed the rink would be coming out and pointed out there's a community rink just two blocks away. He said it doesn't matter how the rink got there; it needs to come out.

"Whether it was formed naturally or unnaturally, it's still unsafe."

Children

Downtown playmates wanted

Getting kids who live in the downtown core to meet isn't always an easy task, thanks largely to the low volume of children living in the area, according to residents.

That's why Urban Kids — a play group of sorts — was created through the Downtown Edmonton Community League to help get kids meeting other kids.


Franka McKague-Larson FACEBOOK

"It's just a matter of getting the word out there and connecting kids," said Chris Buyze, president of DECL.

There are fewer than 250 kids living in downtown Edmonton, according to the 2014 census, something even seven-year-old Franka McKague-Larson has noticed.

"When we see a kid her age downtown, she often points it out to me and says, 'Mom, look, it's a new kid!'" said her mom, Jodie McKague.

The seven-year-old, who has lived downtown with her mom for four years, is hosting the game event because she "doesn't have many friends downtown so she thought it would be a good idea to host a monthly games night," according to the event's Facebook page.

A selection of board games will be available during the event, which runs from 6 to 9 p.m. on Feb. 20 at the DECL space.

STEPHANIE DUBOIS/METRO

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Injunction sought to drive Uber off the road

Ride-sharing. Despite both sides expressing a willingness to work together, city says it can't ignore safety and insurance issues



RYAN TUMILTY
ryan.tumilty@metronews.ca



Scott Mackie, branch manager of current planning, speaks with reporters after the city announced it's seeking an injunction against ride-share company Uber. RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

The city is seeking a court injunction to pull ride-share company Uber off the road.

City officials filed the injunction request in the Court of Queen's Bench on Thursday and are asking the court to prevent the company from offering its service in Edmonton.

Scott Mackie, branch manager of current planning, said the city welcomes new and innovative companies, but they can't ignore the insurance and other issues.

"It's not reasonable to allow any service to operate that poses a risk to the public," he said.

In addition to an order declaring the company is operating illegally, the city wants an order preventing it from recruiting drivers, registering new accounts or advertising or promoting its service.

They also want the company to post any successful injunction on its website and send it to all drivers and users.

In an affidavit as part of the injunction, licensing director Garry Dziwenka said the city is having trouble ticketing Uber drivers individually and needs the injunction.

"When city enforcement staff register user accounts and request Uber rides, those accounts are de-activated by Uber as soon as it identifies that those accounts lead to charges," he wrote.

Coun. Scott McKeen said the city has an obligation to step in because of the company's insurance and safety issues.

"It would be reckless of us to not do an injunction, because we would knowingly be saying , 'Ride at your own risk,'" he said.

Mackie said even with the injunction, the city is open to talking to Uber about a proposed bylaw that would regulate their operation in the city. He noted Edmonton is the only city to attempt to work with ride-share companies. Uber spokesman Xavier Van Chu said the company wants to work with the city as well, but the injunction is disappointing.

"We remain committed to work with them to find solutions," Chu said. "It is unfortunate, however, that despite the vocal support of over 8,000 Edmontonians, the city has decided to spend taxpayer dollars on legal action."

Along for the ride

- No court date has yet been set for a hearing on the injunction.
- Uber is facing a similar injunction in Toronto.

SPCA investigating Alberta reptile zoo

Alberta SPCA officials were on scene at a Drumheller-area reptile zoo that was already facing potential closure due to funding struggles.

Roland Lines, spokesman for the organization, confirmed that investigators arrived at Reptile World Wednesday with a search warrant after a report from a member of the public citing "animal welfare concerns."

Lines said an investigation was ongoing, but it would likely be a week or more before more information would be released.


Two of the many snakes housed at Drumheller's Reptile World. FACEBOOK

"This situation is definitely complicated in that this is a zoo," Lines said. "It specializes in reptiles that have very particular needs for their care and handling."

Reptile World has operated for nearly 26 years and is billed as "Canada's largest live reptile exhibit."

Earlier this week in an interview, founder Dave Bethel said he currently has more than 220 animals on display, including "local amphibians, frogs, a 600-pound alligator, salamanders, python and boas ... we've got everything."

But the facility the zoo operates in is in desperate need of repair, Bethel said at the time. The roof leaks and some exhibits needed upgrading.

Bethel couldn't immediately be reached for comment Thursday morning.

Lines wouldn't say whether any animals had been removed from Reptile World, but said two specialists had been called in to assess Bethel's reptiles.

If the SPCA does proceed with seizing the animals, Lines has already said finding new homes for the reptiles could prove challenging.

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Education

Grade 6 achievement tests to continue through 2016

When it comes to provincial tests, it appears even school administrators can't come up with the right answer.

Alberta Education did advise Thursday that Alberta school boards will be required to press ahead with controversial Grade 6 provincial achievement tests (PATs) this year.

Originally, the plan was to have those students turn to online Student Leaning Assessments in the fall, but a trial of the same tests at the Grade 3 level this past fall was marred in computer glitches and teacher frustration. Even still, it was believed school boards would have the option of whether to proceed with the Grade 6 versions of the controversial PATs.

A letter from Calgary Board of Education senior officials to principals Wednesday — one that was obtained by Metro — informed principals that the PATs would not be written.

"We believe this decision is right for students ... it de-emphasizes their performance on a single test," read the letter.

But a note on the CBE's website Thursday afternoon said the organization was advised by the province that the tests would move ahead not only in 2015, but again in 2016. The move likely signalled a longer trial of the SLAs for Grade 3 students. The tests are also to be introduced at the Grade 9 level at some point.

Alberta Education spokeswoman Tamara Magnan said the ministry remains "committed to fully implementing new SLAs in the early grades, but removing or suspending the current achievement tests in the absence of a reasonable alternative would remove an important method of public assurance that the education system is performing well."

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO IN CALGARY



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Sadie, a 14-month-old Hound cross, made international attention thanks to a video of her being bouncy. LEAH HOLOIDAY/METRO

'Excitable dog' a star on Buzzfeed

Animals. Sadie first got to Edmonton Humane Society in December and has lots of energy, love, says spokesman



LEAH HOLOIDAY
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A pouncing pooch from the Edmonton Humane Society garnered international attention Wednesday, thanks to a quick video clip of the pup practising her jumping skills.

Sadie, a 14-mount-old hound-cross, first came to EHS in December and has both a lot of energy and love to give, said shelter spokesman Travis Grant.

After an initial adoption attempt didn't work out for the young girl, Sadie was brought back to the shelter, where staff at the facility snapped a quick video of Sadie bouncing up and down, next to a sign labelling her as an "excitable dog."

"In less than 24 hours I got a call from Buzzfeed in New York who wanted to cover her story, so she got some international press," said Grant.

Getting dogs like Sadie some attention is vital to finding homes for adoptable pups, said Grant.

"Shelter animals (sometimes) there is a stigma that exists that perhaps they're broken or that they're not good enough or they're poorly behaved and all of these different stereotypes that people might have," he said.

"We work with these dogs to make sure they're ready for adoption. Our goal is to make sure they're successful in the home they go to."

Adoptable dog

- Sadie isn't the first EHS pup to garner international attention. Ripple, a Mastiff-cross, made Internet history last year thanks to a weather report gone awry.
- Sadie is still up for adoption at EHS. For more details on adoptable dogs, check out the EHS website.

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Cycling. Edmontonians getting a handle on bike-sharing website

Some call it Airbnb for bicycles, others say it's a handy way for cyclists to make a small profit. Either way, one Edmontonian says Spinlister has been working to his advantage since he joined a year ago.

An avid cyclist and triathlon coach, Jason Britton has listed several of his bikes on the website, which allows cyclists to rent their bikes out to people in their respective cities.

Britton was approached by Spinlister officials a year ago to join the service because of his connections in the cycling community and because he owns several specialized bicycles.

"I liked the idea of it, and because they're offering insurance and making sure your bike is going to be relatively as safe as possible while doing that, I've given it a shot," he said.



Jason Britton has been renting bikes out on Spinlister for a year. CONTRIBUTED

He's made about $200 from the website but says that will change once more Edmontonians and more people in general start learning about the site.

"As more people become aware of it, then they'll start to see more users of it," he said.

STEPHANIE DUBOIS/METRO

Law

Alberta's former medical examiner sues province

A lawsuit filed by Alberta's former chief medical examiner for what she says was political interference in her job also claims funeral-home staff transported a body in the back of a pickup truck and on another occasion wore a skating costume at a death scene.

Dr. Anny Sauvageau makes the allegations in a statement of claim filed this week against the government, several high-ranking bureaucrats and the justice minister.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

City hall

Arena moving ahead on pace

Edmonton's new arena remains on time and on budget, according to the latest update from city staff.

In a report that councillors will discuss next week, staff say about $188 million has been spent on the project and they expect it to stay on course.

The steel skeleton is expected to be finished by the end of the year, as is the building envelope. METRO

For more local news, visit metronews.ca



U of A Hide and Seek Club's Adam Pinkoski finds a perfect hiding spot on campus. COURTESY MIRANDA STAHN

U of A students get ready (or not) to hide

Guinness World Records. Campus set to attempt largest hide-and-seek game ever



LEAH HOLOIDAY
leah.holoiday@metronews.ca

Students at the University of Alberta will test their hiding skills Friday, as more than 2,000 participants gather to break the world record for largest hide-and-seek game.

Adam Pinkoski, of the U of A's Hide and Seek Club, said the planning for the event has been in the works for months.

According to the rules stipulated by Guinness World Records, one person will play the seeker, while around 2,000 people hide, Pinkoski explained.

Participants will have five minutes to hide anywhere within the Van Vliet Complex and 55 minutes to make their way to the Butterdome.

Unlike other hide-and-seek games held by the club, Pinkoski said Friday's event will have a lone seeker, making it hard to predict how many hiders will be found.

"It's really hard to tell how many people are going to be caught," he said. "Based on the numbers and the sheer size of the area, I'm expecting probably between 100 and 200 people getting caught," he said.

Student union president William Lau will be the lone seeker and called the event a great way to bring the community together.

The current record is held by a group of textile companies in China, where 1,437 people participated.

This isn't the first record-breaking event at University of Alberta. In 2012, the Student Union broke the record for the largest dodgeball tournament, with 4,979 staff, students and alumni playing in the Butterdome.

"We've built this great tradition on campus around challenging ourselves to push boundaries as individuals and as a community to be the best in the world," said Lau.



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Spy charges

Woman detained in China released; husband still jailed

China's Foreign Ministry says a Canadian woman detained with her husband on suspicion of stealing state secrets has been released on bail.

Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said Thursday that Julia Garratt was released while the case remains under investigation.

She and her husband Kevin were detained on Aug. 4 by the state security bureau in China's northeastern city of Dandong, which borders North Korea.

Hong said both have been charged with stealing secrets and spying, and Kevin Garratt has been moved from residential surveillance to the more serious status of criminal detention.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper had discussed the plight of the Canadian couple during a visit to China last November.

Their son Simeon said at the time that he feared the Canadian government wasn't putting enough pressure on the Chinese to release his parents.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

New Brunswick. Arrest made in python deaths

The man who owned the python that killed two young boys in New Brunswick in August 2013 has been arrested in the case, his lawyer said Thursday.

Leslie Matchim said Jean-Claude Savoie was arrested Thursday by police in the Montreal area but he doesn't know what charge or charges his client may face.

Savoie moved from Campbellton, N.B., where the boys died, to live in the Montreal area, Matchim said.

"It certainly by no means was any attempt to evade anything," Matchim said in an interview. "I've mentioned on several occasions in my dealings with the police where he is located."

Earlier Thursday, the RCMP said a person was arrested and is in custody in Quebec. Cpl. Chantal Farrah said no charges have been laid but the investigation is ongoing.

Noah Barthe, 4, and his six-year-old brother Connor were found dead on Aug. 5, 2013, after an African rock python escaped its enclosure inside Savoie's apartment where they were staying for a sleepover.

The 4.3-metre-long python asphyxiated the boys, autopsies said. THE CANADIAN PRESS



Noah Barthe, left, and Connor Barthe. The RCMP say one person has been arrested in the deaths of the boys. THE CANADIAN PRESS



Don Iveson joins big-city mayors to talk funding hopes

Mayor Don Iveson returns to a session during the Big Cities Summit hosted by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in Toronto on Thursday. The 18 mayors in attendance hope to leverage a looming federal election into billions of dollars worth of commitments from Ottawa. While the mayors would not as a group be looking to endorse a particular party, they weren't shy about wanting to see their needs attended to. Big cities account for about two-thirds of the country's population, they noted, and nearly half of the country's federal ridings — 142 seats — are in large urban centres.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Top court to release ruling on right to die

Medicine. Landmark case could have far-reaching consequences

The country's top court is releasing what could be a monumental decision Friday on the right of the terminally ill to end their lives — a ruling that could have implications for Canada's aging population as well as doctors and politicians.

The case has pitted the federal government against the Province of Quebec, divided doctors and forced religious groups to face off against patients on the verge of dying.

Observers on both sides of the debate agree on little, except for the three possible outcomes.

The moral, legal and political debates were reignited by the case of an 89-year-old woman with a degenerative spinal condition who travelled to Switzerland in 2010 to do something she could not do at home in Vancouver: end her life under medical supervision with the counsel, comfort and assistance of her family.

Kay Carter's daughter, Lee, brought the case before the courts in British Columbia and convinced a provincial court judge that a law making it a crime to help someone commit suicide is a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Possible outcomes

- Judges maintain ban on end-of-life options.
- Judges reverse ban on end-of-life options, forcing a revision of Criminal Code laws dealing with murder and aiding or counselling suicide.
- A split ruling to allow assisted suicide but uphold the euthanasia ban.

The decision, overturned on appeal, has snaked its way up to the Supreme Court of Canada, where the controversial question of euthanasia, assisted suicide and the sanctity of human life will be revisited more than two decades after the 1993 ruling barring ALS patient Sue Rodriguez from ending her life.

The Canadian Medical Association, which lobbies on behalf of the country's physicians, has said it is prepared to help lawmakers draft new rules if necessary and recently adopted a policy allowing that in some cases of great suffering it may be appropriate to give in to a patient's request to die.

The coalition of groups opposed to the legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide are also optimistic about a ruling in their favour.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE





Annie Dan stores lake water in a container for use at her Red Sucker Lake First Nation in 2010. THE CANADIAN PRESS

$165M would bring water to 4 reserves

Manitoba. Despite the known cost, only a small fraction has been budgeted for the improvements

Internal federal documents estimate it will cost $165 million to replace government-issued slop pails with modern indoor plumbing on four of Canada's poorest reserves, but only a fraction of that has been budgeted.

Regional reports from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada say $22 million was budgeted in 2011 to install rudimentary indoor plumbing in hundreds of homes in a cluster of northern Manitoba reserves known as Island Lake.

The reports date back to the fall of 2013 and were received under access-to-information legislation.

They say upgraded homes were outfitted with basic plumbing hooked up to individual water and sewage tanks.

Although the reports repeatedly say much more money is needed for a community sewage system, no new money has been budgeted in more than three years.

"The project costs exceed available funding," states a report dated March 2014.

A spokeswoman for Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt said the minister was not available for comment and did not provide anyone to answer questions.

Emily Hillstrom sent an emailed statement saying the government has made progress over the past four years — with updated plumbing and new water trucks to improve the situation on the reserves.

Chiefs blamed a lack of running water and overcrowding for the rapid spread of illness, and studies later backed them up.

"Preparations for remote First Nations communities prior to future outbreaks should include … attention to fundamental health determinants, including housing conditions such as overcrowding, access to potable water and sanitation," said a study published in the Canadian Journal of Public Health in April 2012.

As part of its response to the outbreak, the feds sent body bags to the reserves, raising the ire of chiefs. They said that when they asked for help to bring running water to half the homes, Ottawa sent 1,000 slop pails to use as toilets.

Jonathan Flett, executive director of the Island Lake Tribal Council, said the upgrades that have been done are a Band-Aid solution. With up to 18 people living in one home, sewage tanks fill up fast, he said.

"Eighteen people have to go 18 times a day, maybe twice," he said.

The reserves don't have enough water and sewage trucks to keep up with demand, and there is nowhere to store them out of the cold. All outdoor water tanks have heaters to keep them from freezing, which adds to already soaring hydro bills, Flett said.

The government reports say installing the kind of indoor plumbing found in other municipalities doesn't come cheap.

"Many houses in the Island Lake communities do not have indoor plumbing, and in some cases there is no space for a bathroom," reports state. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Boko Haram

Extremists under attack turn fury on Cameroonians

Nigerian Islamic extremists on the run from a massive, three-nation offensive took revenge Thursday on civilians in neighbouring Cameroon, shooting and burning scores to death and razing mosques and churches. France's president warned that the world is not doing enough to end the wanton killings by Boko Haram.

Cameroonian officials said more than 500 wounded people are trapped in the town of Fotokol, where fighting began Wednesday and continued Thursday. They said Boko Haram fighters are using civilians as shields.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Argentina

Gov't focuses on former spy chief in death of prosecutor

The spy-novel-like drama that has gripped Argentina since the mysterious death of President Cristina Fernandez's nemesis took a critical new twist Thursday when investigators called one of the country's most enigmatic spy chiefs to testify before them.

The testimony by Antonio Stiuso, who was dismissed in December and whose whereabouts were unknown, could be key to determining whether Fernandez is able to survive the storm in the waning months of her presidency or whether the deepening scandal will swamp her administration.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Church

Pope says it's OK to spank kids

Pope Francis says it's OK to spank your children to discipline them — as long as their dignity is maintained.

Francis made the remarks this week during his weekly general audience, which was devoted to the role of fathers in the family. Francis outlined the traits of a good father: one who forgives but is able to "correct with firmness" while not discouraging the child. "One time, I heard a father in a meeting with married couples say, 'I sometimes have to smack my children a bit — but never in the face so as to not humiliate them,'" Francis said. "How beautiful!" Francis remarked. "He knows the sense of dignity! He has to punish them but does it justly and moves on."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Leaders back new Ukraine peace plan

Talks. German chancellor and French president to meet Putin on Friday in Moscow

Carrying a peace plan that reportedly incorporates proposals from Russia, the leaders of Germany and France met Thursday with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko in a hastily arranged mission to bring an end to the accelerated fighting in the east of the country.

The trip by German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Francois Hollande, who will follow by meeting Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday in Moscow, came as concerns rose about whether the U.S. would grant lethal aid to Ukraine and as NATO formed a quick-reaction force of 5,000 soldiers in response to Russia's increased military muscle-flexing.

The high-level diplomacy came as resurgent fighting killed eight more people in eastern Ukraine and fuelled fears the conflict is threatening Europe's overall security. More than 5,300 people have been killed since the fighting started in April.

The top NATO commander, U.S. Air Force Gen. Philip Breedlove, said Thursday that Russia continues to supply the separatists with heavy, state-of-the-art weapons, air defences and fighters.

In comments to reporters after the talks with Poroshenko, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry urged Russia to show its commitment to a peaceful, diplomatic solution by ceasing its military support for the separatists and bringing them to the negotiation table.

"Our choice is diplomacy," Kerry said, making no mention of providing Ukraine with lethal military aid.

At a later news conference with Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Kerry said President Barack Obama "is reviewing all his options; among those options obviously is the possibility of providing defensive systems to Ukraine."

"We are not interested in a proxy war. Our objective is to change Russia's behaviour," he said.

Nonetheless, U.S. lethal aid to Ukraine would likely intensify the conflict and further polarize the West and Russia.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Jordanians rally against ISIL

Jordanians chant slogans to show their support for the government during a rally in Amman, Jordan, on Thursday. Jordanian warplanes bombed ISIL targets on Thursday, state TV said, after Jordan's King Abdullah II vowed to wage a "harsh" war against the militants who control large areas of neighbouring Syria and Iraq.

RAAD ADAYLEH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

N.Y. judge to hear arguments for opening record in chokehold case

Two months after a grand jury declined to press criminal charges in the police killing of an unarmed New York City man, a state judge must decide whether to disclose details of the secret proceedings.

The New York Civil Liberties Union and other petitioners have gone to court on Staten Island to demand that Judge William Garnett open the record in the Eric Garner case — a position opposed by Richmond County District Attorney Daniel Donovan. Garnett is set to listen to arguments at a hearing on Thursday morning.

In court papers, the NYCLU cited the outcry over the grand jury's decision not to indict Daniel Pantaleo — the white New York Police Department officer seen on a widely watched video putting the unarmed black man in what the medical examiner called a fatal chokehold — as a compelling reason to make an exception to the long-standing practice of keeping the process secret. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Taiwan plane crash survivor says engine 'did not feel right'

From the start of the flight in Taiwan's capital, Huang Jin-sun suspected trouble.

"There was some sound next to me. It did not feel right shortly after takeoff. The engine did not feel right," the 72-year-old man told ETTV television Thursday from his hospital bed.

Huang was one of 15 people who survived when the TransAsia Airways turbojet carrying 58 people crashed Wednesday into a river minutes after taking off in Taipei. At least 32 people died and 11 are still missing.

Moments before the plane banked sharply and crashed, one of its pilots told the control tower, "Mayday, mayday, engine flameout," according to an aviation official who asked not to be identified.

"Engine flameout" refers to flames being extinguished in the combustion chamber of the engine, so that it shuts down and no longer drives the propeller. Causes could include a lack of fuel or being struck by volcanic ash, a bird or some other object.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Clothing suppliers

Ethical wear for federal workers

Mounties, prison guards and park wardens could soon be sporting duds made in an ethical way. Public Works — which buys uniforms and work wear for federal government employees — is giving serious thought to going to suppliers who follow strict labour laws and have good working conditions, a document shows. The department, which each year buys about $80 million worth of apparel, set up a special group to look into buying more from ethical clothing manufacturers.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vatican

Pope tells kids he's computer-illiterate

Pope Francis has made a confession of sorts, telling a 16-year-old girl from Spain that he doesn't have a clue about how to work a computer. The 78-year-old Francis made the confession Thursday during a Google Hangout with several disabled kids from around the world. The children showed Francis how they make use of technology, including braille keypads, tablets and video cameras.

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An employee hangs sale signs at a Target store on the first day of its closing liquidation sale in Toronto on Thursday.
DARREN CALABRESE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Liquidation sale misses its Target

Retail. Promised 30% discount items hard to find, leaving bargain-hunters frustrated

Bargain hunters who expected to unearth major deals at their local Target stores on Thursday, the first day of its liquidation sale, were sure to be disappointed once they got a look at the prices.

Store signs that promised discounts of up to 30 per cent yielded to shelves with price cuts mostly in the 10- to 20-per-cent range.

"I'm not super-impressed, really," said Paul Boychuk, who walked into a Toronto Target store expecting better savings.

The elusive deeper discounts quickly became a conversation piece for customers who roamed the store aisles, discussing the savings, or lack of them, on their cellphones.

Liquidation sales began at Target's 133 stores across the country after an Ontario court gave the go-ahead for the sale on Wednesday, less than a month after the U.S. retailer announced its intention to leave Canada.

Despite some complaints, the 30 per cent discount did exist — if shoppers were looking for cosmetics or women's accessories. Most everything else in the store was reduced by less, with clearance sales on items such as diapers, dishes, and most electronics discounted by 10 per cent.

Apple products, such as the iPad and iPod Touch, were just five per cent off.

Customer traffic spiked at Target locations across the country compared with an average day at the store.

Lineups began forming outside one location in Toronto before sunrise as hopeful shoppers looked to be first inside for the best buys. By the time employees threw open the doors, more than 50 people had gathered and within an hour several hundred were walking the aisles.

Olivia Dupuis was an occasional Target Canada shopper during the company's brighter days and said Target's departure will leave a retail hole. "It was a one-stop shop.... I liked certain brands they had, so I'll miss that," she said at a Toronto store.

As with most liquidations, the discounts are likely to grow as time goes by and the company looks to clear out product that hasn't sold. Target hopes to be out of Canada before the summer with the goal of closing all of its stores by mid-May.

Not everyone will miss Target Canada, including Boychuk, who said he finds the best deals on e-commerce retailer Amazon.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"It was a one-stop shop, so I liked coming here because of that. I liked certain brands they had, so I'll miss that, for sure."

Olivia Dupuis, an occasional Target Canada shopper during the company's brighter days, who said Target's departure will leave a retail hole

Hacking. Sony Pictures head gets reassigned

Amy Pascal will step down as co-chairwoman of Sony Pictures Entertainment and head of the film studio, nearly three months after a massive hack hit the company and revealed embarrassing emails.

Pascal, one of the most powerful women in Hollywood and the force behind such critical and commercial hits as The Social Network and American Hustle, will launch a major new production venture at the studio focused on movies, television and theatre, Sony Pictures said. Her career with Sony has spanned nearly 20 years.

During the hack, Pascal came under fire for allegedly racist remarks about U.S. President Barack Obama's presumed choice in movies that surfaced in leaked emails. Pascal also faced criticism for green-lighting the film that may have inspired the hacking to begin with: The Interview.

Pascal will transition to the new venture in May. Sony Pictures will finance Pascal under a four-year contract.

"The studio's legacy is due in large part to Amy's passion for storytelling and love of this industry. I am delighted that Amy will be continuing her association with SPE through this new venture, which capitalizes on her extraordinary talents," said Sony Entertainment CEO Michael Lynton in a statement.


Amy Pascal, Sony Pictures Entertainment co-chairwoman.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Since Pascal has led the studio, Sony Pictures has amassed over $46 billion US in global theatrical box-office revenue and 315 Academy Award nominations. Some of the films she shepherded include the last three James Bond films, The Da Vinci Code, Adaptation, Eat Pray Love, The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, Moneyball and Zero Dark Thirty.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DVD rentals. Redbox pulling out of Canada

DVD and Blu-ray rental company Redbox is shutting down its Canadian operations and pulling its rental kiosks out of Canada.

The Chicago-based company announced Thursday it made the decision after failing to generate sufficient business at its 1,400 rental kiosks across the country.

In a telephone interview from Los Angeles, company president Mark Horak said the last date for rentals will be Feb. 13, with the last return date on March 5.

Most of the kiosks and their contents are expected to be removed and returned to the United States by the end of March.

Asked how many employees and contractors would be affected by the shutdown, Horak would say only "very few."

Redbox landed in Canada in mid-2012 and set up most of its machines at grocery and convenience stores.

Physical media has been declining in popularity for several years as more viewers turn to streaming video and video-on-demand options.

Last summer, Canadian DVD rental company Zip.ca shut down its Ottawa-based DVD-by-mail operation and removed its rental kiosks from grocery stores in parts of the country.

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VOICES

HANDS OFF MY CHIANTI, GOVERNMENT



THE KOHLER REPORT
By Rebecca Kohler

For the most part, Canada hasn't dealt with Prohibition since the 1920s (though P.E.I. was dry until 1948, suckers). I'm not saying we're dealing with Prohibition now, but if you take a look around this country, it might feel like you're at least dealing with Prohibition's stubborn grandchild.

For a brief moment, it looked like the idea of selling beer in corner stores was back on the table here in my home province of Ontario, but that wish/dream/desperate longing was thwarted this week when Premier Kathleen Wynne announced that while changes are coming, convenience-store beer would not be one of them.

Ontario is not alone in its archaic, condescending liquor laws. Aside from Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, most provinces do not allow the sale of beer in corner stores, instead selling the beverage in a mix of highly regulated public and privately-owned stores. Why is buying beer almost as annoying as renewing my health card?

The history is deep. In most provinces, when Prohibition came to an end and average citizens were again able to legally purchase alcohol, they needed a permit, kind of like a driver's licence, to do so.

Every time you went to your Liquor Control Board, you had to show this permit, and the clerk would make a record of what you purchased. Man, I'd be pretty embarrassed if someone had a record of every trip I've made to a liquor store. It would be a novel by now. I'd title it Chianti: A Love Story.

So it's great that things have changed a smidge since early post-Prohibition Canada. I'm also thrilled I'm able to vote as a woman. But it's still no picnic. Meanwhile, you can buy booze in grocery and convenience stores in the U.K., New Zealand, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Malta — the list is pretty much never-ending. In Japan you can buy beer from street vending machines! And in the States, you can get liquor at the pharmacy, which admittedly grosses me out. Picking up your gout medication at the same place you'll be scoring a bottle of Jack? Settle down, now. But that said, these countries are not falling apart at the seams and they are not overrun by zombie-like drunks.

What is the worry? That people will all of a sudden start guzzling beer just because it's there? That we'll all turn into Barney Gumble from the Simpsons? I guess our governments think this is best for us. But, *is it*? Think of a hectic Saturday when you have a bunch of errands to run: dry cleaning, a stop at Canadian Tire, a kid's birthday party drop-off... Now grocery shopping, and while you're picking out a roast beef, you realize, "Frig. I have to go to the liquor store." Now you're late, driving in a rush, you're stressed, you forget to pick up your kids, they develop abandonment issues — pandemonium!

Booze hogs, not bozos

The governments aren't stupid. They saw how much money bootleggers made during Prohibition and they wanted a piece of it.

Then there are places like Nunavut where there are no liquor stores — you have to order alcohol by mail — a precaution taken to help curb alcoholism and stave off drinking-related crimes.

Sadly, this has not helped, and thanks to bootleggers and other providers of illegally sourced alcohol, they're still boozing it up there.

This has less to do with protecting us from our bad habits and more to do with money. The governments aren't stupid. They saw how much money bootleggers made during Prohibition and they wanted a piece of it. In fact, in Ontario, it was the government that decided to start selling alcohol again after the people voted against the idea (don't even get me started on those bozos).

And to this day, the government profits greatly every time you get your bevvy on — because it knows people are going to drink and they will find a way to do it. Sure, I whine about the walk to the liquor store, but does it stop me from going? No way. I'd crawl there if I had to.

This is a charade! The government "protects us" by keeping our liquor in a cookie jar on a high shelf, but it's like, "Dude, I know where the ladder is. Could we just keep the cookies on the counter? I have things to do."

Rebecca Kohler is a stand-up comic, writer, actor, gymnast, lawyer and chemist. (Some of this isn't true.) Follow her on Twitter @becca_kohler

Happy face/Sad face

From double disgraces to temper tantrums, Metro weighs in on the news that made headlines this week:

LYING LANCE

Here we are again, shaking our heads at Lance Armstrong. This time it's over the disgraced cyclist's admission that he hit a couple of parked cars in Aspen, then let his girlfriend take the blame. Armstrong said he was trying to protect his teenagers from seeing his name in the papers again. Well played, Lance. Well played.





A MILE IN HIS SHOES

A Detroit man who walks 34 kilometres every day to get to work may soon be getting a much-needed car — at least — thanks to a crowdfunding campaign that's raised more than $230,000. James Robertson, who makes $11 an hour at a job not accessible by transit, has been walking to work in all weather for 10 years. He's never been late and never missed a day.

TODDLERS AND TIARAS AND TANTRUMS

This week in sore-loser news, the runner-up in the Miss Amazon pageant snatched the tiara off the winner's head, threw it down and stormed off stage like, well, a toddler. Sheislane Hayalla claimed her rival, Carol Toledo, bought the title.





NENSHI MANIA

Finally, a Canadian mayor is making international headlines for all the right reasons. Calgary's Mayor Naheed Nenshi has been named the best mayor in the world by U.K. research group City Mayors Foundation. Nenshi beat out 120 other mayors to win the title. (Cowboy) hats off to you, Mr. Nenshi!

PUT DOWN THE PHONE!

It's a sign of the times, we suppose. This photo of a boater in California has gone viral after the man was seen texting while a humpback whale breached beside him. Witnesses said he never looked away from his phone and missed the whole thing.



metro

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It's our fault that movies are dull

Analysis. As audiences flock to see films based on comic books, video games and old TV shows, more serious and original movies get lost in the shuffle


Channing Tatum and Mila Kunis star in Jupiter Ascending. CONTRIBUTED

In Focus



RICHARD CROUSE

Who's to blame for Hollywood's current lack of originality?

Are the suits too eager to green-light reboots and sequels?

Are screenwriters so uninspired that they can't think past remaking their favourite 1980s TV shows?

Do actors only consider characters based on video games?

Of course not.

The people responsible for the movie doldrums these days live in your mirrors and selfies.

That's right. If you go to the cinema and didn't check out Birdman, Whiplash or Obvious Child, but did go see Guardians of the Galaxy 25 times, you forced Hollywood's hand, guaranteeing another 10 years of the big-screen exploits of comic-book characters, Rocket Racoon and company.

Guardians is a fun movie that people liked and Hollywood is in the business of giving moviegoers what they want.

But the fear is that a constant stream of familiar-feeling films could create a less-discerning audience. If you are fed a steady diet of dog food, eventually you'll get used to the taste.

Birdman is an accessible and entertaining movie. But with a total gross of less than one weekend's business for Guardians, it's unlikely to inspire a Birdman 2: No Plucking Way.

However, a bigger box office take for films like Birdman could inspire more adventurous films, as an antidote to the slew of movies with numbers in their titles.

Big-budget Hollywood doesn't often take the path less trodden.

People went to see Inception, but I would argue the reference point for that movie was director Christopher Nolan — hot off the Batman streak — and not the unique story.

Less successful were originals like Edge of Tomorrow, despite the usually winning mix of great reviews and Tom Cruise, and Transcendence, the computer hard drive horror that brought Johnny Depp's box office average way down.

Despite those high-profile failures, this weekend, Warner Brothers has gone off the map to show support for an original story from The Matrix directors, the Wachowskis.

Jupiter Ascending is a space opera about genetically engineered warrior Caine (Channing Tatum) who helps human janitor Jupiter Jones (Mila Kunis) take her place as heir to the galaxy.

Big stars, big-name directors and a new story should appeal, but already the knives are out.

"Jupiter Ascending looks like a great movie," wrote @RickIngraham on twitter, "to never see."

Jupiter Ascending will rise or fall based on audience interest, but if it tanks, it'll be harder for other unusual stories to get made.

There are already at least 30 sequels, reboots and spin-offs scheduled for 2015 — everything from Star Wars: The Force Awakens to Paul Blart: Mall Cop II — so unless you want another Daddy Day Care reboot in 2016, get out of your comfort zone and see something new and original today.

Richard's Ratings

SpongeBob SquarePants: A Sponge Out of Water

Seventh Son

Outcast

Love, Rosie

SCENE



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Now in theatres

Ratings and synopses courtesy of Rotten Tomatoes. For more movie reviews, trailers and news go to RottenTomatoes.com.

Ratings: *Certified Fresh:* *Fresh:* *Rotten:* *Audience response:* *Audience anticipation for the film:*

Animated



The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water

Director. Paul Tibbitt

Stars. Tom Kenny

SpongeBob SquarePants, the world's favourite sea-dwelling invertebrate, comes ashore to our world for his most super-heroic adventure yet.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 77% **Audience:** 89%

Drama



Seventh Son

Director. Sergey Bodrov

Stars. Jeff Bridges, Julianne Moore

In a time long past, an evil is about to be unleashed that will reignite the war between the forces of the supernatural and humankind once more. Master Gregory is a knight who had imprisoned the malevolently powerful witch, Mother Malkin, centuries ago. But now she has escaped and is seeking vengeance.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: No reviews yet **Audience:** 51%

Comedy



Jupiter Ascending

Director. Andy Wachowski, Lana Wachowski

Stars. Mila Kunis, Channing Tatum

From the streets of Chicago to the far-flung galaxies whirling through space, Jupiter Ascending tells the story of Jupiter Jones (Mila Kunis), who was born under a night sky, with signs predicting she was destined for great things.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 37% **Audience:** 97%

Drama



Mr. Turner

Director. Mike Leigh

Stars. Timothy Spall, Paul Jesson

This film explores the last quarter century of the great if eccentric British painter J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851). Profoundly affected by the death of his father, loved by a housekeeper he takes for granted and occasionally exploits sexually, he forms a close relationship with a seaside landlady with whom he eventually lives incognito in Chelsea, where he dies.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 98% **Audience:** 90%

Mystery



The Boy Next Door

Director. Neill Fearnley, Rob Cohen

Stars. Jennifer Lopez, Ryan Guzman

Jennifer Lopez leads the cast in The Boy Next Door, a psychological thriller that explores a forbidden attraction that goes much too far. Directed by Rob Cohen and written by Barbara Curry, the film also stars Ryan Guzman, John Corbett and Kristin Chenoweth.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 13% **Audience:** 50%

Action



Mortdecai

Director. David Koepp

Stars. Johnny Depp, Gwyneth Paltrow

Juggling Russians, the British Mi5, his impossibly leggy wife and an international terrorist, debonair art dealer and part-time rogue Charlie Mortdecai must traverse the globe armed only with his good looks and special charm in a race to recover a stolen painting rumoured to contain the code to a lost bank account filled with Nazi gold.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 12% **Audience:** 41%



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From Ned Stark to immortal Internet meme

Actor interview.
Sean Bean talks about web fame and working with the Wachowskis on Jupiter Ascending

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood


Sean Bean plays a human-bee hybrid helping out earthling Jupiter (Mila Kunis) in Jupiter Ascending. CONTRIBUTED

Sean Bean has made a career in big-budget genre fare, from James Bond to The Lord of the Rings to Game of Thrones.

His latest sends him to outer space with co-directors Andy and Lana Wachowski for Jupiter Ascending, in which Bean plays a human-bee hybrid helping an unwitting earthling (Mila Kunis) embrace her true heritage as one of the most powerful beings in the universe.

That career of his, by the way, has also inspired an entire sub-genre of Internet memes, remixing his more famous lines for commentary on sports, politics, pop culture or anything, really. Not that he necessarily knows what a meme is, exactly.

When you're working with the Wachowskis, do you ever play one off of the other, since you have two directors?
You mean try and get one pissed off with the other one?

Say you don't necessarily like the direction one of them's giving you...
No, no (laughs). It was quite good, really, because if Andy was directing, Lana would take a back seat, and vice versa. It was actually kind of hard to distinguish because they were so kind of focused and singular in what they wanted to get. They have kind of different styles. I guess Andy was a bit more physically oriented than Lana. She was more cerebral and low-key in the sense that she wanted a very kind of even reading, a very natural kind of rendition. I guess, because we were in a sci-fi film, it's quite easy to push it maybe too much, and she didn't like that. She liked it quieter, which I totally agree with. It's an interesting kind of thing to think about. People don't actually declaim everything. Every scene you're in, if you've got one line, sometimes it's important but it's not, you know, in the scheme of things it's just a simple, natural reading. That was quite interesting, listening to them and improving it in terms of what we were doing.

How aware are you of the Internet memes built up around your characters?
Kind of, I think. Yes, I saw one that said, "One does not simply walk into Bramall Lane," which I thought was quite good because my soccer team is Sheffield United. We played the Spurs the other night, and that was the thing: "One does not simply walk into Bramall Lane."

What is it like to actually be an Internet meme?
Is that what it is, a meme? I'm a meme? It's quite good, yeah. And it can be applied to lots of situations, that "One does not simply …" line. Yeah, it's great.

Also, on behalf of all people named Ned, I wanted to thank you for giving us someone cool in pop culture with our name.
Oh yeah. Ned Stark, yeah. I don't really meet a lot of Neds. It's an unusual name. What's it short for, Edward? That's a good name.

My mom seems to think so.
Definitely a good name, yeah.

More online!

- As a special treat, we got Sean Bean to indulge us by doing a live-reading of some of the more ridiculous Sean Bean Memes we could come up with. Go online to metronews.ca to see the results. You won't be sorry.


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Film looks at Mexican drug war through eyes of Texans

Documentary. Ross brothers spent months in a small town on the Rio Grande to shoot latest movie, Western

Documentary directors and brothers Bill and Turner Ross have made a career out of examining microcosms in the modern American landscape — from their first film, 45365, about their middle-class hometown of Sidney, Ohio, to Tchoupitoulas, which follows three young brothers wandering around New Orleans at night.

Their latest film, Western, takes them to a foreign territory: the Mexican border.

The film, which picked up a special jury award for verité filmmaking at this year's Sundance Film Festival, transports the audience to the once harmonious, now violence-plagued border towns of Eagle Pass, Texas, and Piedras Negras, Mexico.

"The Rio Grande is a natural boundary in visualizing the frontier," explained Turner. "If you're talking about something as visual as a film and using landscapes, I think the most iconic way to do that is to see two cities on either side of the river."

This new frontier is shown through the eyes of real-life cattleman Martin (pronounced Marteen) Wall and Eagle Pass's longtime mayor Chad Foster, both of whom have had their livelihoods challenged by the increasingly imminent threat of drug cartel violence.

But it's not a political movie. Western is atmospheric, inventive and immersive.

The Ross brothers say their father, a high-school history teacher, taught them that history is not just "facts and texts."

"Those people are real and they fell in and out of love and they had dreams. He instilled in us an appreciation of the moment you're in. We've always tried to capture the fleeting moment," said Bill.

Inspired by the likes of The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance, The Ox-Bow Incident and "a lot of the psychedelic Westerns of the '70s," the brothers set up residency in Eagle Pass for 13 months, entrenching themselves in the lives of the townspeople.



Documentary directors Turner Ross, left, and Bill Ross focus on a small Texas border town and its battles against Mexican drug cartels. CONTRIBUTED

While shooting, Wall even took Turner shopping for more appropriate frontier clothes.

"A couple of times, it just got too real and it wasn't worth it. We like making movies, we like going on adventures, but if someone gets lost, it ain't worth it," said Bill.

"We had to make sure we were with the right people, shaking the right hands. As Bill said, we weren't trying to get killed," added Turner.

Ultimately, though, the brothers are just interested in people, and "sitting on a porch with somebody all day and trying to get a better grasp of what they're doing," said Bill.

"It's our life as well, and, in the end, there's a document to share," said Turner.

"(Westerns) represent the times that they're from. That's why we engage in that genre. That's why we call the film that. How does this medium, that is at once so familiar in everyone's personal mythology, also reflect the times that it's a part of?" said Turner.

Up next? The Northeast.

"That one's more about the people than the place, though," said Bill.

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Ross brothers filmography

- **45365 (2009).** A documentary exploring the brothers' hometown of Sidney, Ohio.
- **Dinosaur Curtains (2010).** Short film on a family awaiting their turn on Who Wants To Be A Millionaire.
- **Tchoupitoulas (2012).** A documentary that follows three brothers through late-night New Orleans.
- **River (2014).** The Ross brothers travel in a houseboat down the Mississippi from Ohio to New Orleans.

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Lego Movie songwriter is sorry for the earworm

Awards season. Jaunty tune called Everything is Awesome has gotten a bit too ubiquitous for musician's relatives


A still from the Lego Movie CONTRIBUTED

Canadian-reared songwriter Joshua Bartholomew and his wife Lisa Rae Harriton co-wrote the earworm Everything is Awesome from The Lego Movie — and he's very sorry.

"I've apologized to so many people," Bartholomew said in a recent telephone interview. "I live in L.A. now but most of my family is back in Canada, and many of them are educators, teachers.

"I got so many emails and texts saying: 'What have you done?' All their students were singing it."

Bartholomew and Harriton, who together go by Jo Li, were invited aboard the Lego project by the movie's studio after Shawn Patterson crafted the song's first draft.

Now, the jaunty tune is in the running at Sunday's 57th Grammy Awards (for best song written for visual media) and at the Oscars on Feb. 22 (for best original song), although Patterson is the only contributor named on the Oscar nod.

The pair reworked a "couple things" from Patterson's version, changed lyrics and, most drastically, altered the production in their own take, which they sang together. That recording of the song appears in the film, while a version by Calgary's Tegan and Sara was released as a single.

Bartholomew, 30, says producers requested a tune that served a dual purpose.

"First they wanted it to be a song that was this oppressive, Orwellian, catchy sort of song that brainwashed everybody in the Lego community to follow their rules," he explained."But it had to turn around at the end of the movie and become their anthem of freedom."

Bartholomew has written songs for Emerson Drive (Let Your Love Speak) and Esthero (Over) while releasing music under his own name as well. He says he's in the process of getting a band off the ground with Nick Perri, brother of Jar of Hearts singer Christina Perri.

But this is certainly a game-changing hit for the cheerful Bartholomew, who is now settled down south.

His dad was in the military, and Bartholomew grew up on the move, spending most of his life in Alliston, Ont. His musical parents surrounded him with instruments and he learned drums, piano, guitar and bass before his adolescence was through.

"You have a lot of time in Canada in the winter," he chuckled. "It gets cold. You hole up inside and figure out how to get stuff done."

In January 2011, Bartholomew wandered down to L.A., intending to meet with publishers for a few weeks. He didn't leave. He lived in a trailer and built the social circle that eventually helped him and his wife land the blockbuster Lego gig.

"Now my wife and I have a house. I sold the trailer," he said. "I do miss it though. I grew up in Canada, camping in the summer for the whole summer by the lake. I'm definitely a nomad by nature."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted



"I got so many emails and texts saying, 'What have you done?'"

Songwriter Joshua Bartholomew

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When you get music's biggest names — and egos — all in one room, you can expect drama to ensue. From frenemies, to relationship drama, and trash talk about who really deserves to win, the 57th Grammy Awards are shaping up to be the most controversial yet. Here's what to keep an eye out for

EMILY LAURENCE
Metro in New York City

5 controversies about this year's Grammys

Everyone has an opinion about Iggy Azalea

As soon as it was announced that Iggy Azalea was nominated for Best Rap Album (up against Childish Gambino, Common, Schoolboy Q, Wiz Khalifa and Eminem), musicians didn't hold back declaring how they felt, especially those who feel she is appropriating black culture, including Q-Tip and Solange Knowles.

Most publicly, Azealia Banks slammed her in an interview with Hot 97 saying, "The Grammys are supposed to be awards for artistic excellence. Iggy Azalea is not excellent." Azalea also has a public feud going on with Eminem, also nominated, after he alluded to rape while mentioning her in his song Vegas. Given all the drama, Best Rap Album is the award on everyone's mind.



Iggy Azalea GETTY IMAGES



Selena Gomez and Zedd GETTY IMAGES

Will Selena Gomez show up with Zedd?

Between their flirty Instagrams and constant sightings together, the rumour mill is abuzz that Zedd has replaced Justin Bieber as the leading man in Gomez's life. But seeing as though they haven't made things "official" yet, the red carpet watch is in full effect. Will they use this moment as their chance to confirm the relationship. You watching, Biebs?

Bad Blood between Taylor Swift and Katy Perry continues

Swift and Perry still haven't buried the hatchet for their public frenemy drama, and given that both singers are nominated, they'll both to be there, with their game faces on. How far away will they be sitting from each other? Will they run into each other on the red carpet or at any after parties? Will they shock everyone by posing for a photo together? One thing is sure, we'll all be watching.



Katy Perry GETTY IMAGES



Beyoncé GETTY IMAGES

Sam Smith rumoured by some to beat out Beyoncé

Nominees for the night's biggest award, Album of the Year, include Beck, Beyoncé, Ed Sheeran, Sam Smith and Pharrell Williams. While Beyoncé has become the most nominated female artist in Grammy history with 46 nominations in all (including 17 wins), insiders predict that Sam Smith will overtake the queen. It's a new artist versus a proven pro and the competition is fierce.

Will Ariana Grande show up Madonna?

Madonna may be 56 years old, but she's not slowing down any time soon. Her 13th album Rebel Heart is out later this year and she's performing for the fifth time at the Grammys. But does she still have what it takes to compete with chart-topping teen favourites, like Ariana Grande? Grande has publicly declared her love for Madonna, but she could outshine her idol with her own performance. Tune in to see which pop star has the best performance.



Ariana Grande GETTY IMAGES

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Now we'll Sia. Singer turns heads with hits

The Grammys. Showing her face or not, reclusive songwriter Sia earns recognition as pop star


Pop singer Sia. GETTY IMAGES

Think it's tough to catch a glimpse of Sia's face during her performances these days? Try booking an interview with the reclusive singer.

The performer, who has risen in the pop music ranks thanks to writing hits for female stars and hitting the charts with her own tunes, has dodged press and even turns her head during live performances. The creative campaign for her latest album, 1000 Forms of Fear, was a success thanks to radio airplay and its highly viewed music videos starring Maddie Ziegler of Dance Moms. Sia's album debuted at No. 1 and Chandelier became a multi-platinum international success.

She even earned four Grammy nominations — though she's not sure she'll attend the big show on Sunday.

"I know, it's getting a little close," longtime manager David Russell said in an interview last week (Sia, obviously, wouldn't be interviewed for this story). "It remains to be seen what we'll do."

Sia and Chandelier earned nominations in the top categories, including song and record of the year.

Russell, who has worked with Sia for more than a decade, said they didn't see the commercial success coming.

"We didn't anticipate that kind of reaction, but that fact that that's come has been extraordinary," he said.

Last year marked a breakthrough for 39-year-old Sia, who released her first album in 1997. After writing for a slew of singers, from Rihanna (Diamonds) to Beyoncé (Pretty Hurts), she finally saw her own Top 40 success with Chandelier, a song she originally thought she might send to Rihanna. The writing success came around the time Sia co-starred on David Guetta's Titanium, a song the mega-producer had to convince her to do.

Russell says Alicia Keys was originally considered for Titanium, and even Mary J. Blige cut the track.

"It simply came down to David begging that Sia stay on the record, and wisely she agreed," Russell said. "I mean, it literally happened like two days after she was like, 'That's it. I'm done making my own records. I'm just going to be a behind-the-scenes writer now.'"

Russell says at the time, Sia was becoming famous and it began to make her "feel really uncomfortable" and "really unhappy, so she wanted to put the brakes on that."

But Titanium became a seminal moment for Sia, which was followed by another Top 10 hit, Flo Rida's Wild Ones, which she also sang on and co-wrote.

Sia also has written for Katy Perry, Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera and Kylie Minogue.

Sia's other Grammy nominations include best pop solo performance and music video for Chandelier.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS


Sia and NYC Gay Men's Chorus backstage during Trailblazers. GETTY IMAGES


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This recipe serves four. COURTESY RICARDOCUISINE.COM

Dinner. Endive, Peach and Sausage Pizza combines unlikely textures and flavours



RICARDO COOKS
Chef Ricardo
Ricardo Magazine

Pizza Dough

1. In bowl, combine water, oil and sugar. Set aside.

2. In bowl with wooden spoon, combine flour, yeast and salt. Add water mix and combine into soft ball. Knead dough 3 minutes on floured surface.

3. Place dough in clean and lightly oiled bowl. Cover bowl with a damp cloth and let rise in a warm and humid place for about 1 hour or until the dough doubles in size.

Pizza Toppings

1. With rack in lowest position, place pizza stone or an upside-down baking sheet in the oven. Preheat the oven to 450 F (230 C).

2. In bowl, combine endives, onion, sausage and oil. Season with salt and pepper.

3. Cut dough into four pieces. On floured work surface, roll out four 10-inch (25 cm) round crusts. Sprinkle a little cornmeal on hot stone or baking sheet. Use sheet of parchment paper that will allow you to easily slide the dough in the oven.

4. Spread quarter of endive mixture on each crust and sprinkle with quarter of cheese. Bake on hot stone or baking sheet for 10 minutes or until golden brown. Repeat with the remaining crusts.

5. Garnish pizza with peach slices. FOLLOW RICARDO ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND ON RICARDOCUISINE.COM OR SUBSCRIBE TO HIS MAGAZINE'S ENGLISH EDITION, WHICH LAUNCHED IN 2014.

Ingredients

Pizza Dough
- 1 cup (250 ml) warm water
- 3 tbsp (45 ml) olive oil
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 2 3/4 cups (385 g) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tsp instant dry yeast (quick-rising)
- 1/2 tsp salt

Pizza Toppings
- 4 medium-sized endives, cored and thinly sliced
- 1/2 red onion, thinly sliced
- 3/4 cup (150 g) Rosette de Lyon sausage, cut into 1/4-inch (1/2 cm) dice
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) olive oil
- 2 cups (200 g) grated Gruyère cheese
- 2 ripe but firm peaches, sliced
- Salt and pepper

Liquid Assets

Think outside the pizza box



LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
liquidassets@eastlink.ca

I love pizza.

In my neighbourhood alone, I can order everything from an artisan pie that tastes like I'm in Naples, to a mass-market version the size of a table.

The infinite variety of toppings to choose from makes pizza one of the most versatile wine-pairing opportunities.

I gravitate towards a meatier pie and a glass of red Italian Chianti, but this week's recipe from Chef Ricardo really thinks outside the pizza box. It's not the combination of sausage and endive that's unique. It's the addition of peaches that really makes for an interesting slice.

Both endive and peaches prefer a white wine with a touch of sweetness, and the Viognier and Chenin Blanc grapes provide enough sugary goodness while still finishing fairly dry.

Boekenhoutskloof's 2013 The Wolftrap White ($12.95 - $15.99) from South Africa combines both to create a refreshing, pizza perfect white with floral aromas and tropical fruit flavours. PRICES REFLECT THE RANGE ACROSS THE COUNTRY. SOME PRODUCTS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE IN ALL PROVINCES.





SPORTS 4

On-ice tracking closer to reality

NHL. Chips in jerseys, pucks being tested to record every move in hockey starting as early as next season

Imagine tracking Sidney Crosby's every move on the ice — in real time.

It may not be far off.

The NHL is experimenting with player-tracking technology that could be available as early as next season for broadcasters and fans.

During last month's all-star game in Columbus, Ohio, chips were put in jerseys and pucks to track everything from speed and movement to shift length and ice time. The success of this first experiment could make it more widespread.

"We're not exactly sure where this will all take us," NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said last week in Vancouver. "Ultimately, we are hoping to deliver the kind of data that will create insights and tell stories that avid and casual hockey fans will enjoy.

"We are attempting to embark upon a journey that hopefully will enable us to create and then maintain a digital record of everything in our game and compile a complete digital history."

Sportvision, the same company responsible for first-and-10 lines in football and "K zone" strike-zone mapping in baseball, has worked with the NHL for six years to get to this point. In co-operation with the NHL Players' Association, each player had a chip in the collar of his jersey during all-star weekend. Chips were in each puck so infrared cameras in the ceiling of Nationwide Arena could track every movement.

With this technology, teams, players and fans can see how fast a player is skating, his top speed and average.

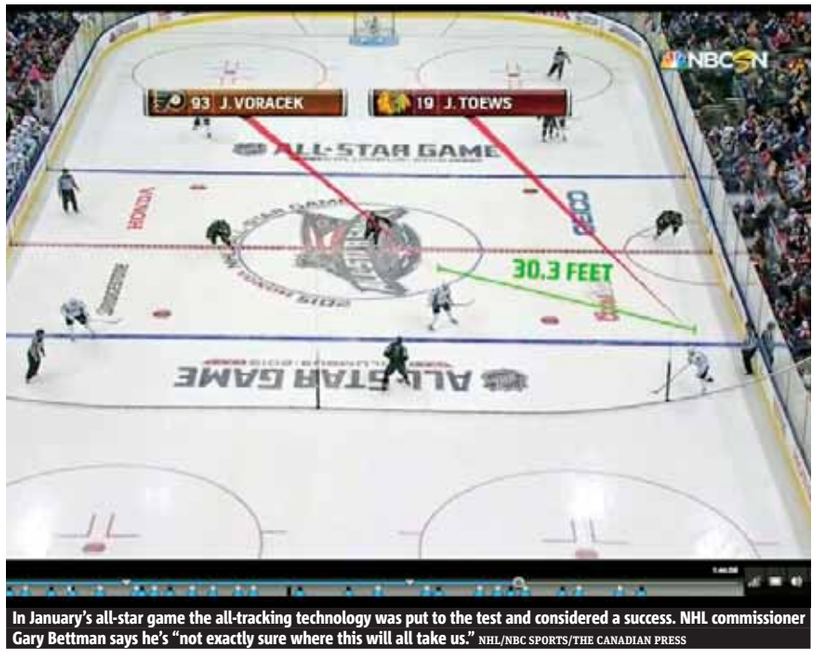
The league and NHLPA must come to an agreement before there's even a consideration about having player tracking in place for real games. It's much more data, and with that comes some hesitancy on behalf of some players.

"We haven't finished discussing all that with the players," NHLPA executive director Don Fehr said. "Are there issues some players are concerned about? Sure. But it falls into the generalized category of creating meaningless statistics."

Sportvision CEO Hank Adams thinks there's a use for the stats. TV networks can determine speed and movement in real time, with lots of information to mine.

"I'd say all around it was a success for us," Adams told The Canadian Press. "We were very pleased and at some point hopefully it translates into something more long-term. But that's yet to be seen."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



In January's all-star game the all-tracking technology was put to the test and considered a success. NHL commissioner Gary Bettman says he's "not exactly sure where this will all take us." NHL/NBC SPORTS/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Soccer

Impact to host TFC at semifinal

The defending champion Montreal Impact will face Toronto FC while the Vancouver Whitecaps will meet the Ottawa Fury or FC Edmonton in the semifinals of the 2015 Amway Canadian soccer championship.

The Impact will open the series between Major League Soccer rival Toronto on May 6 at Saputo Stadium before playing the return leg at BMO Field on May 13.

Edmonton and Ottawa, clubs in the second-tier NASL, will play a preliminary-round two-leg series, with the winner taking on MLS side Vancouver. The winning NASL team will host the first leg of the semifinal May 6 with Vancouver hosting the second leg May 13.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NFL

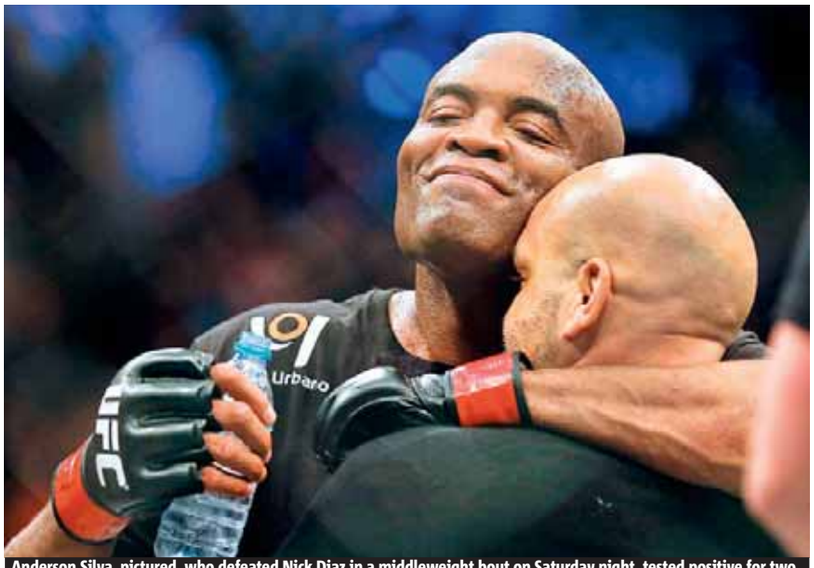
Union pushes for Peterson's reinstatement

Adrian Peterson remains in NFL limbo and his union's latest attempt to restore his playing status will take place in federal court.

Attorneys for the NFL Players Association are scheduled to argue Friday for the Minnesota Vikings running back's reinstatement from a suspension levied by the league under its personal conduct policy. The punishment, stemming from the child abuse case involving Peterson, has sparked another divide between the NFL and the NFLPA over the player discipline process.

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Anderson Silva, pictured, who defeated Nick Diaz in a middleweight bout on Saturday night, tested positive for two steroids last month in California. LE BASKOW/LAS VEGAS SUN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Regulator applauds UFC for continued drug tests

MMA. Promotion said to have 'aggressively gone after their own fighters' who use PEDs

The cost of seeing MMA icon Anderson Silva swallowed up in a doping scandal is probably incalculable to the UFC.

But the executive director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission says it's to the UFC's credit that the organization paid the freight for the out-of-competition test that caught the former middleweight champion.

"I will tell you that the UFC has aggressively gone after their own fighters that are using performance-enhancing drugs," said Bob Bennett.

'B' sample

The Silva camp has asked for the 'B' sample from the out-of-competition test to be checked at another lab. But according to the World Anti-Doping Agency, the 'B' sample can only be checked by the same lab, essentially to preserve chain of custody.

"The UFC has provided the financial means for us to do this out-of-competition testing.... Not only does the UFC pay for us to do it, then they lose some of their top fighters that we catch," he added. "So I think it's a real credit to the UFC that they're trying to level the playing field or level the Octagon."

Silva, who has denied cheating, tested positive for two steroids at a Jan. 9 test in California. Coincidentally, Nick Diaz, whom Silva beat in the main event of UFC 183 last Saturday in Las Vegas, tested positive on fight night for a third time for marijuana.

Both men have been temporarily suspended pending a hearing.

While Diaz has a medical-marijuana card issued in California to treat anxiety, Bennett says that doesn't mean a green light in Nevada. A fighter can ask for a therapeutic-use exemption for health issues but that probably wouldn't work given other options to treat anxiety disorders.

That may change down the line, with the drug decriminalized in several states, he added. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Don't worry about how much something creative is going to cost you. If your plan is a good one — and it is — the cosmic powers that be will help you.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
It isn't a good idea to speak from the heart over the next 24 hours, not with the negative opinions you have. Soon your outlook will be more positive.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Your confidence may take a dive today but it's no big deal. As a Gemini you are rarely down for long and come the weekend you will be full of life and laughter again.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Under no circumstances commit yourself to anything of a business or financial nature today. If others try to pressure you into signing on the dotted line that is a sign to wait.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Be careful how you talk to and deal with loved ones today. Something you say could be taken the wrong way and cause all sorts of problems.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You may not be able to get into the swing of things socially today but that's OK. Send time with your thoughts and once you have made sense of them you will be the life of the party.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Your principles may cost you money today but you are not the sort to abandon your standards for financial reward.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Someone in a position of power will put you to the test today and you must raise your game and show them what you can do. There is little doubt you will win in the end.

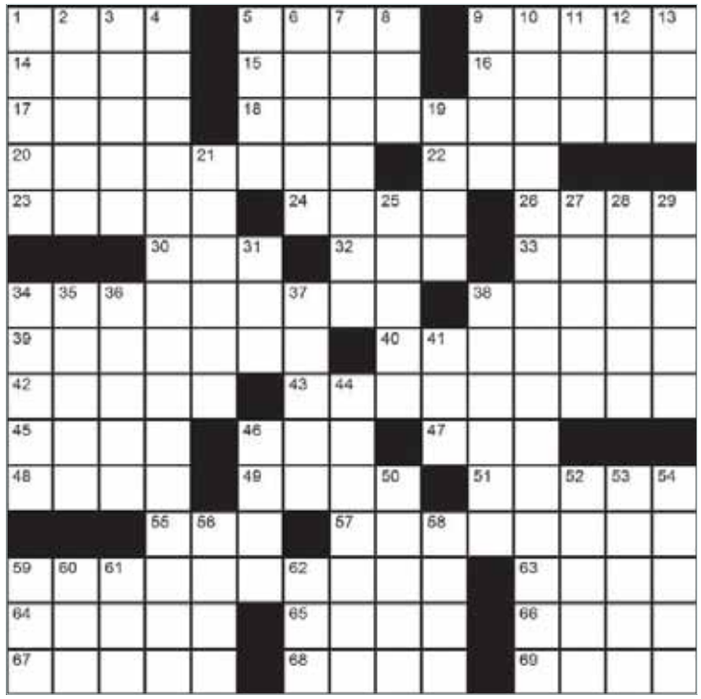
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
If you allow fear to guide your thoughts and actions you will miss out on something that could make your life so much more enjoyable. Why should you be afraid of something just because it's new?

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
If you go to extremes over the next 24 hours you are sure to provoke a strong reaction. Is that wise? Try to find a more socially acceptable outlet for your ambition and aggression.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You may find it hard to get along with people in positions of authority today but if you take them on you are likely to lose. Back down gracefully.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You may feel run down today but don't worry because things are not as bad as they seem. What little things can you do to make yourself feel comfortable?

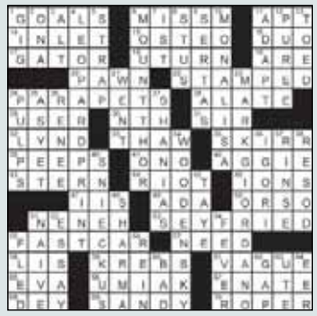
Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across
1. "Do the Right Thing" (1989) pizzeria
5. "Break __ __ Me Gently"
9. Home
14. Tom Jones' "__ __ Should Ever Leave You"
15. Tarps-laying reason
16. Cried, kitten-style
17. Biblical land
18. Le Chateau __ (Rustic resort hotel in Quebec)
20. Morden, MB: Marine reptile like 'Bruce' at the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre, the largest one on display in the world
22. Waste
23. Cache
24. Hawaiian coffee
26. Suggest
30. Tic-Toe link
32. Black Sabbath singer ...his initials-sharers
33. Hodgepodge
34. Way up Whistler
38. Burst with pride
39. Captured again
40. Vancouver attraction, __ Conservatory
42. Tales
43. Eminence
45. Flooding oper.
46. Ms. Larter
47. Liq. measures
48. Exchange [abbr.]
49. Socialite sorts, shortly
51. Arise
55. Peculiar
57. Ancient Roman racers
59. 1909: J.A.D. McCurdy makes history by piloting this aircraft in Canada's first powered flight: 2 wds.
63. Mark Harmon's show
64. Donald Duck nephew
65. "By the Time _ __ to Phoenix"
66. Backsplash square
67. Anxiety
68. Damp
69. Backyard blades

Down
1. Scott __ (MP from Newfoundland)
2. "The game is __." - Sherlock Holmes
3. Tibet's capital
4. Canadian host (who played in the CFL) of HGTV's "Tackle My Reno": 2 wds.
5. "__ la Douce" (1963)
6. Shish __ (Dish popular in Montreal)
7. It was hot with a cat on top: 2 wds.
8. London's prov.
9. Podium
10. Ludwig's 1824 symphony: 2 wds.
11. Hoo-er
12. Benicio Toro link
13. Tokyo, once
19. Times
21. San Jose hockey players
25. We Will __ __ Undersold! (Store's boast)
27. L'__ __ Montreal
28. Frasier's brother
29. Driving costs
31. Toronto-born actor Mr. Bennett
34. Actor Jon
35. Lift with might
36. Fall into _ __ (Get played)
37. Fireplace
38. "Welcome Back, __"
41. Race unit
44. Person's inners shield
46. Mailing info, briefly
50. The Taming of the __
52. __-economic status
53. Handy
54. Spelled-out followers of Rs
56. Bug repellent ingredient
58. Li'l lawyer
59. Extremist org. in 1974 headlines
60. Euripides play
61. Oaf
62. Performed

Yesterday's Crossword

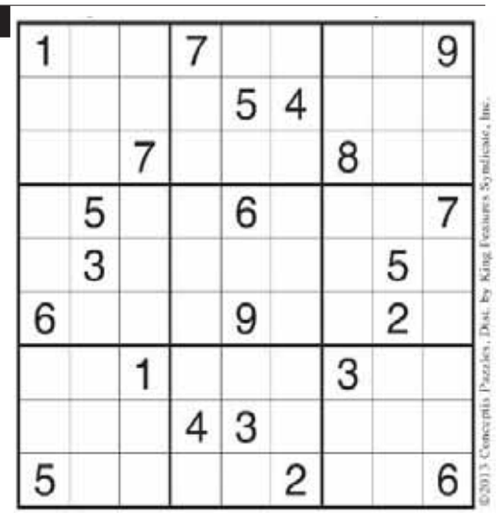


Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



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Yesterday's Sudoku

1	6	5	2	7	8	9	3	4
3	8	7	4	6	9	2	1	5
9	2	4	1	3	5	6	8	7
7	3	2	5	8	4	1	6	9
5	9	1	3	2	6	7	4	8
8	4	6	7	9	1	5	2	3
4	1	3	6	5	7	8	9	2
2	5	9	8	1	3	4	7	6
6	7	8	9	4	2	3	5	1


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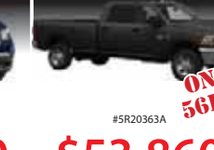
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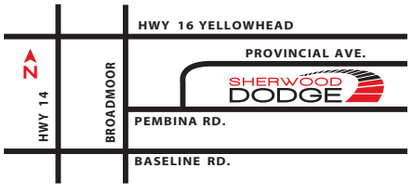
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